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Learning and innovation: a methodological proposal from the teaching of Media Management

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Abstract: After its adaptation to the EHEA, the Department of Journalism IV of the Complutense University of Madrid began a project of methodological renovation and educational innovation –linked to an R&D project– in the teaching of Media Management, with the aim of providing future communication professionals with the skills required by the new business reality. The project was developed in different stages and was structured along the following lines of action: use of ICTs and Web 2.0 tools to develop activities that put new energy into the learning process: podcasts, interviews with executive directors and managers, entrepreneurial projects 2.0, intensive use of the Virtual Campus and blogs. In addition the teaching innovation project involved collaborative work to resolve real cases, with the implementation of the Educlick system's software and hardware. This article presents the foundations and results of the new learning methodology model, which could be extrapolated to the teaching of other subjects of journalism.

Keywords: Educational innovation; EHEA; Media Companies; Methodology; Podcasting; Educlick.

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1. Introduction

The adaptation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has involved a profound renewal of the Spanish university system with the creation of new degrees and the transformation of some of the existing ones. In addition to promoting greater homogeneity in the higher education of the different States of the European Union, and transforming various formal structural and organisational aspects, the EHEA has created a momentum of change that involves the incorporation of innovative teaching methods, the experimentation with new learning strategies, and stimulates the reflection on the role of teachers in the new context. Thus, the construction of the EHEA involves curriculum reform and methodological change (De-Miguel, 2006: 219).

This renovation process can be explained as a true paradigm transformation in the conception of university education that just begins to sink in many of our centres. While the so-called Bologna plan was initially criticised as a process of change directed excessively in a vertical manner by the European and national institutions, it seems that after the first years of implementation it has actually generated an internal debate within the university community and above all a desire for renewal in much of the faculty. In difficult times like these, the "way in which journalists are trained becomes relevant because, in the last third of the 20th century, it has become the institutional model that has achieved support from the legal system along with some social recognition" (Pestano, Rodríguez and Delponti, 2011: 402).

Although this is not part of the objectives, this study has to acknowledge the many problems and contradictions with which this convergence has been implemented in Spain: lack of adaptation to the reality of its education structures; absolute shortage of resources in most of universities to implement the reform; absence of a genuine strategy of effective communication (Peinado and Fernández-Sande, 2010: 280); insufficiency of incentives for professors; etc. Nonetheless, relevant educational changes begin to be very visible in the functioning of the new graduate and postgraduate degrees, and it has been confirmed –by different evaluation surveys– that students are more satisfied with the new adapted programmes than with the previous degrees.

1.1. Theoretical framework

The university reform of the EHEA is based on three principles that should inspire the teaching activity: the enhancement of teaching methods focused on the work of students, the development of collaborative learning and a new conception of the teacher as guide or tutor in the autonomous construction of knowledge by students (Mauri, Coll and Onrubia, 2007: 3). The constructivist theoretical perspective is very influential in this way of understanding the teaching processes.

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Students acquire a much more active role in their own learning process, in contrast to the traditional model in which the teacher transmitted knowledge and the student was limited to receive it more or less passively to later demonstrate its understanding. The new objective is to design activities focused on students, in which they are capable of learning by themselves and acquiring significant knowledge. This new idea arises as a response to the proved inefficiency of the previous educational paradigm in the development of skills and competences by students.

Active learning is directly related to experience. Authors like Piaget and von-Glasersfeld have developed much of the theoretical doctrine underpinning this pedagogical model. In 1986, Shuell summarised the five most important features that learning must have in a student-oriented teaching system: active learning, self-regulated learning, constructive learning, situated learning and social learning.

The concept of active learning arises from the consideration that is not possible to learn through someone else, but that people have to learn by themselves. Self-regulated learning occurs when students themselves evaluate their own activities and this allows them to reinforce their knowledge. Constructive learning is based on the idea that individual knowledge is largely a personal construction. The concept of situated learning emphasises that it is very important that knowledge arises in a contextualised manner so that it is ready to be applicable to different situations. Finally, social learning highlights that it is very important that teaching occurs in social interaction given that learning is not an exclusively individual process.

To these five features we should add the importance of developing in university students the skills needed to ensure their lifelong learning. In the current information and knowledge society citizens must try to have a continuous training. In a communication market that influences all the countries that are part of it, according to their particular interpretation of the business models. These models affect the practice of journalism and can damage the international cultural transit and labour relations (Hanitzsch, 2008: 414).

Learning should not stop at the end of the official education programme. It is necessary to prolong education throughout people's active life. This need explains why the university system is abandoning an approach that focuses on contents and objectives that are always linked to the formal and external evaluation of knowledge, and embracing the development of skills and competences that are much more transferable to the professional and personal spheres.

The education ministers of the European Union proposed "lifelong learning" as an essential element in the EHEA (Prague Declaration, 2001, and Berlin Declaration, 2003). The working group in Bologna –which put forward the educational policy aimed

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at creating a European Higher Education Area– started the university reform with four major purposes:

- To improve students' education in order to facilitate their integration and improve their performance in the labour market.
- To prepare students to assume their role as active citizens who participate in a democratic society.
- To offer education that ensures the personal development of the student.
- To help students to develop the ability to maintain a broad and advanced knowledge base.

The Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, held in Louvain la Neuve (Belgium) in 2009, established the guidelines to consolidate the EHEA and the priorities that university teaching must implement up to 2020, including: the need to work with the objective of offering a wider employment offer to students; to promote competences that ensure their lifelong learning; and to focus the teaching processes on the student (Louvain Declaration, 2009). Educational planning should balance cognitive, attitude and professional competences. However, a large part of the teaching faculty continues to give the highest priority to the learning of knowledge, cognitive skills, in the planning of courses and the production of course guides (Lozano and Vicente, 2010: 260).

Another central element of the new teaching model is cooperative learning, which is understood as "the didactic use of small groups for students to work together and maximise their own and each other's learning" (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, 1999: 14). The joint activity of students favours their cognitive and social development.

This type of learning requires the teacher to organise effectively the proposed activities and to provide the necessary guidelines to ensure that such cooperation among students is characterised by the following elements: positive interdependence, team members must perceive the importance of maintaining a strong commitment to the success of others for the achievement of the shared objectives; individual and group responsibility, each team member is responsible for the outcome of the work assigned to him/her and the team is responsible for achieving the collective goal; stimulating interaction, teamwork involves the sharing of resources and that all members support each other throughout the learning process; in addition to interpersonal and group techniques.

Students must learn to make decisions, schedule their time, communicate with their peers, manage conflicts, etc. Finally, group self-evaluation is necessary to make the learning process fruitful. In other words, it is essential for the team to analyse its

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progress, mistakes and to identify those elements that should be changed to improve its collective activity.

The activities based on cooperative work allow the generation of formal and informal learning opportunities. Informal learning is considered key to generate knowledge that is tacit and totally necessary for the student to be able to respond to the very dynamic reality of our society. In professional life, informal and autonomous learning is considered the main way to increase knowledge. In the most traditional teaching models this type of learning was hardly taken into consideration, however, in the new educational paradigm its potential is understood and occupies a prominent place. Let's review some characteristics of the informal learning:

- Informal learning cannot be planned –given that a direct control can never be exerted over it– but it can be encouraged by planned environments and activities.

- Informal learning emerges from the interaction between students.

- Informal learning is implicit for the most part and students are not aware of the knowledge they get from it.

- Informal learning focuses on the communication between students and the situation that favours it. The focus is no longer in the contents, the curricula nor the teaching by the professor.

- Most informal learning activities have a social and cooperative nature –however the activities typical of formal learning tend to be individual–.

- In order for informal learning to occur it has to be immersed in a given context.

- Informal learning almost always originates from practice, not from theories.

The design, implementation and evaluation of teamwork activities require a great deal of time from both teachers and students, and on many occasions this can reduce the time dedicated to the explanation of the course contents. Teachers should find the most effective distribution between contents, activities and methodologies through their course planning. We believe that the skills developed through cooperative learning compensate for the possible loss of content in the course programme. In addition, collaborative work increases the satisfaction of students with the learning process and promotes positive attitudes towards the subject of study (Domingo, 200: 232). Students consider that the existence of small groups in classrooms, the internship offer, and

teachers' commitment to students are strengths of the university education (Herranz *et al*., 2009: 262).

The new teaching model requires educating our students to integrate them into our society, which is known as the networked society by theoretical currents like connectivism. This objective requires university education to be networked as soon as possible (Rubio, 2009: 42). Cooperative learning is an essential tool for the construction of this new knowledge.

In order for students to generate significant knowledge and develop the skills necessary for their personal and professional development a cooperative and permanently-interactive activity must exist between teachers and students. Under this new perspective, the role of teachers is directly affected: they no longer have to be the "creators" of knowledge, which is transferred vertically to the apprentice. The teacher becomes a guide, a mentor, a tutor in the autonomous learning process of students.

César Coll speaks of a didactic triangle formed by the contents (which are the teaching objects), the learning activities of students, and the educational activity of the teacher. The successful learning depends on the interaction between the three elements (Coll, 2004: 12). The teacher continues to be a fundamental figure in the process because, as Onrubia points out: "The interaction between the student and the content does not guarantee by itself the optimal constructions of meanings and senses. The educational aid of the teacher is the element that should seek to facilitate these optimal forms of construction" (Onrubia, 2005). The teacher acts as an intermediary that is responsible for facilitating the learning experiences of students and guiding them throughout the process.

In 2005, the European Parliament and the Council approved a proposal on key competences for lifelong learning, which are "necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment". Competences are understood as "a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context". The education system should equip citizens with eight key competences: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and cultural awareness and expression.

In addition to providing citizens with the thematic knowledge, universities must integrate these transversal competences in the curriculum. These guidelines are collected in various white papers developed by the National Quality Assessment and Accreditation Agency of Spain (ANECA) for undergraduate degrees. Of the proposed

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competences we are going to examine the following three as they are crucial in our teaching innovation project: Digital competence is defined as "the confident and critical use of Information Society Technologies (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet".

The European Higher Education Area should integrate the ISTs and ICTs in its learning processes and curricular activities. There are two possibilities to achieve this: through the creation of specific courses dedicated to ICT or through the integration of these contents in other subjects.

The integration of ICTs in our educational activities is essential, but it is wrong to focus the learning process on them. ICTs are powerful tools that provide possibilities for the transmission, exchange and access to knowledge. But it is the activities developed by students and teachers what determine the achievement of the learning objectives (Coll, 2004: 16). Too often the mere incorporation of ICTs has been considered as an educational innovation despite the fact that educational innovation can only occur if these technological tools are associated with the educational practices.

The emergence of the Web 2.0 and the new participatory and collaborative technologies, like wikis, blogs, podcasts, and social networks, have opened endless possibilities for learning and innovation. These new means of communication and information generate a perfect context for students to develop skills such as critical thinking, collaborative work, autonomy and creativity. The Web 2.0 has facilitated the paradigm shift in the learning processes and has reinforced many of the guidelines of the Bologna Process (Esteve, 2009: 60).

The development of entrepreneurship is another basic skill which is included in the proposal of the European Parliament and the Council and is of great relevance for our study. Entrepreneurship is understood as the “ability to turn ideas into actions. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives”. In this competence, the establishment of social or commercial activities is considered fundamental for the everyday life of people and especially for entrepreneurs. Methodologies such as case studies and problem-based learning are particularly effective to introduce students in information and resource management, systematic analysis, decision-making, and self-assessment.

Problem-based learning is "developed in small work groups of people, who learn collaboratively through the solving of a complex and challenging problem, which is

raised by the teacher with the aim of triggering students' self-directed learning. Thus, the teacher becomes a learning facilitator" (Morales and Landa, 2004: 146).

The teaching methodology of case studies is closely related to problem-based learning. Cases are selected by teachers to represent significant and often problematic situations drawn from reality. The goal is to convert these cases into learning and training scenarios. The students must study and analyse the case to try to find possible solutions and answers to the problems existing in the proposed situation, either expressly or tacitly. The resolution of the case requires an individual reflection by the student but also teamwork and group discussion (Mauri, Colomina and Rochera, 2006: 220).

One of the great advantages of this teaching method is that it requires students to relate and apply their knowledge –received from both the course and previous experiences– in a situation drawn from reality. It therefore favours metacognition processes. Successful learning through this active methodology depends largely on the ability of the teacher to guide and stimulate the different work groups, and on the good selection and exposition of the case. The cases should have the following characteristics:

- They must pose a real but manageable situation
- They must be clear and understandable
- Important and secondary information should be mixed –so that students learn to manage it and filter it–
- They must be resolvable in a limited time
- They must be resolvable with the knowledge made available to the student

After having exposed the theoretical framework and having summarised the main guidelines in which the convergence of the EHEA is based, we will describe our educational innovation project.

1.2. Justification

The university must be responsible for the education of social communication professionals due to the importance of the discipline and the demands of the knowledge society for more educated, trained, and cultured journalists with the ability to interpret complex realities.

In recent years the Spanish universities have started to adapt their communication programmes to the EHEA. The new degrees have been designed to achieve a harmonious balance of theoretical and practical contents (López, 2010: 232). Media Management is a very specific scientific subject that has been taught since 1971 at the

School of Information sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid, with the aim of facilitating the exercise of professional journalism.

The contents of this scientific area have provided basic knowledge on the operation of media companies, which involves the critical interpretation of the reality of the communication industry, a sector that has achieved a major role in this global information society.

With the introduction of the EHEA, in the 2010-2011 academic year, the "Media Management Theory" subject was created as part of the new bachelor's degree in Journalism. This subject is compulsory, biannually, and is worth 6 ECTS credits. The main objective of the new subject is to provide the knowledge and competences necessary for journalism students to:

- Obtain the education needed to facilitate their professional incorporation into media companies. The subject should contribute to the development of the student in the different professional profiles identified by ANECA in its White Paper: editor of journalistic information in any kind of platform; press officer or institutional communication officer; communication researcher, teacher or consultant; website manager; and contents editor.

- Equip students with the capabilities that will enable them to assume leadership roles in communication companies in the future.

- Make sure students are familiar with the business operations and market structure of the media and the basic principles of the economic and financial role of media companies, with the aim of improving their capacity for analysis, interpretation and production of information about today's economy.

1.3. Hypothesis

With the introduction of Media Management Theory in the new journalism degree, the Department of Journalism IV of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid has implemented a series of educational actions that encourage innovation in the teaching of this subject, which is so far framed in the second academic year (4th semester) of the bachelor's degree. However, the Department is aware of the problems that change may bring.

-How to place first-year students in this new stage of higher education, which is at the centre of the educational strategy, with an active role in which teachers need to promote a real critical learning. From the beginning, the strategy was to combine different teaching methods (master lectures, workshops, seminars, work experience, and tutorials)

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and expository methods (case studies, work groups, expositions). Moreover, the strategy included using all possible communication channels with students and to train them in the use of ICTs and added platforms, such as the virtual campus, to promote e-learning.

-This new approach required the implementation of an active model to learn about the reality of media companies which involves an important effort in the development of new teaching materials and resources. The strategy would fail if teachers do not achieve a much more personalised teaching in which students themselves develop, with the necessary teacher support, most of these materials and activities. The staff responsible for the teaching of the subject proposed a teaching innovation project that would implement the proposed model in the course of one academic year (which is divided into two four-month academic terms).

1.4. Objectives

The project aims to improve the teaching of Media Management Theory through different approaches. Some of the practical effects of its implementation in the classroom will be:

1. The introduction of real cases and scenarios of media companies, thus connecting the business world with the university teaching of journalism.

2. The expansion of the repertoire of teaching methods applied during the course. The subjects in the new degrees should be designed based on the need to integrate different techniques and tools in the learning process. The selection of case studies allows the student to solve problems through the application of concepts learnt in other sessions.

3. The combination of problem-solving methods and the analysis of cases are ideal to develop many of the professional skills that a subject like Media Management Theory must provide: capacity for analysis, critical thinking, teamwork, decision making, time management, communication skills, etc.

4. The case-based teaching model proposed encourages the active and collaborative learning by students through the “learn by doing” paradigm.

5. To improve the motivation of students and their interest in the subject through interactive sessions in the classroom (supported by immediate remote response devices, also known as clickers, and discussions) and the Virtual Campus.

6. The proposed work plan allows a better distribution of educational activities and a genuine process of continuous evaluation.

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7. The teaching model enhances students' use of virtual and classroom-based tutorials, and reinforces the role of the teacher as guide in the learning experience.

8. The approach of the practical activities requires students to become familiar and skilled in the use of certain ICTs need to develop collaborative work: Google Docs, wikis, forums, specialised search engines, Online Public Access Catalogues, etc.

9. To consolidate the advances achieved in the teaching of the subject during the 2010-11 academic year (the first phase of the teaching innovation project) and to intensify the process of convergence in the EHEA.

1.5. Contributions after the first stage: course 2010-11

The process of innovation linked to the aforementioned subject was conducted in two stages that correspond to the 2010-11 and 2011-12 academic terms. The first stage of the project is officially identified as *Proyecto de Innovación y Mejora de la Calidad Docente Nº 247* ("Project Nº 247 for Teaching Innovation and Quality Improvement"), which is funded by the Vice-chancellorship for Teaching Development and Quality of the Complutense University of Madrid. This stage focused on the use of ICTs and different Web 2.0 communication tools –also known as participation technologies (Sánchez-González and Alonso, 2012: 148)– to develop a range of practical activities that would help improving learning. During the first course different workshops and teacher-supervised practices were proposed to encourage students to produce different audiovisual materials that would allow them to interpret the current reality of the media companies (press, radio, television and Internet).

These activities enabled the production of two products that were incorporated into the course work and study materials:

a) The production, by groups of students, and subsequent weekly transmission of a forty-minute podcast that analysed and discussed media management topics.

b) The production of videos with a series of interviews with people in charge of different areas within media companies. These interviews addressed some of the main topics included in the course guide. Moreover, students had to perform various professional projects –like proposing a new media company– and participated in discussions in the classroom and the virtual campus.

After this first stage was completed, the results and students' responses were very satisfactory (Peinado *et al.*, 2011):

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- Students' class participation and attendance improved very significantly. The examination of the final grades of the eight participating classes provides relevant and satisfactory data: in average, only 7.3% of students did not attend the ordinary examination session, and 15.8% quit this course. Since this is the first year in which this subject is taught we cannot compare these results with previous courses but we can confirm that both results are well below the number of dropouts and absences registered in other courses in the same area of knowledge in undergraduate groups. More than 75% of students passed the course in the ordinary examination session, which is very positive and encouraging with respect to the applied teaching methods.

- The course contents were adapted largely to the learning features of the student, by bringing them closer to the theoretical contents of the business reality. For this purpose we applied different teaching methods (such as master lectures, practical tutorials and simulation of certain professional routines) that familiarised students with the productive and organisational structures of media companies. The four teachers who participated in the project and applied these new learning systems for the first time agreed (in the coordination sessions) that they had good acceptance and motivated students much more than the traditional systems.

- Most of the planned activities were conducted. One of the main challenges to start the course's teaching plan was to achieve the objectives and to complete the activities within the deadlines while taking into account the available human and technical resources. The total number of students who took the course –about 330 students– and the conduction of group activities required a great deal of coordination and supervision work from teachers. In the eight cohorts of first-year journalism students to which the course was given, teachers managed to complete the planned activities within the deadlines.

- Students produced about 40 podcasts about topics related to the Media Management course. The podcasts lasted from 20 to 30 minutes and in some cases they were transmitted in a weekly basis and most of them were made available through the Internet. Moreover, about 60 interviews were conducted with media professionals (journalists, presenters, commercial, advertisers, managers, etc.) to obtain their testimonies about the situation of the profession of journalism.

- The reality of media companies was shown to students through the development of different professional competences: teamwork; decision-making; accountability; development of professional and informative criteria; improvement of students' autonomy in the search of information. Moreover, students were brought closer to the media world through the conduction of interviews with media professionals. The production of audiovisual media contents related to the subject helped students to

experiment with radio and audiovisual information and languages, and introduced them to the digital edition tasks.

- The teaching of the course was digitised by using the Moodle platform, which improved its use by students and facilitated teaching and learning contributions. In addition, the virtual and classroom-based tutorials increased thanks to the university's internal e-mail system and the improvement of such tools as social networks, blogs, forums, etc. The activities included in the project have energised all these bi-directional communication tools.

- The teaching innovation project turned out to be an important incentive to enhance coordination between the teachers of the subject and has encouraged the development of a unified programme for the different cohorts taking the Media Management course.

2. Methods and work plan

After these results were analysed, during the 2011-12 academic year we started the second stage of the project which, in addition to maintaining the contents and activities successfully initiated in the previous course, sought to complement the teaching methods through the incorporation of the analysis of real business situations and the resolution of problems.

The proposed objectives required an action plan that included a series of activities that, if conveniently planned, would allow the application of the new procedures and materials in students' autonomous learning process.

2.1. Participants

The planned activities were directed to the 8 cohorts taking the Media Management Theory course, which is taught during the first year of the journalism programme. The first four groups took this subject in the first semester (September-February) and the other four in the second semester (February-June). Each cohort was usually formed of 86 enrolled students, so about 690 students took the course in the 2011-12 academic year. Teaching planning was based on ECTS credits, of which 40% are devoted to master lectures and 60% distributed in practical classes and case studies (35%), tutorials (10%) independent work (15%). The activities proposed in this project are included in this second group of activities although certain master lectures were included for the previous conceptualisation that is considered necessary.

The course had 2 classroom-based sessions per week: one reserved for master classes and the other for the rest of the planned activities to be carried out by different work teams. Throughout the semester, students had to complete four hands-on activities: the production of a podcast about the subject; the conduction of interviews with media professionals; the resolution of practical suppositions of financial analysis; and the study of actual cases of media companies. It is this last activity which the second phase of the innovation project aimed to enhance.

2.2. Action plan

First phase: The first phase of the action plan involved the preparation of the practical case studies by teachers:

Teachers held previous meetings to determine suitable cases to link to the course's contents and the objectives outlined in the course guide. In principle, teachers sought real cases of media companies that included situations that had been recently faced by managers and staff.

The action plan included the preparation of four practical suppositions per semester, so that by the end of the 2011-12 academic year eight different cases were resolved by the Media Management students.

Each case included different variables that had a direct or indirect relationship with the concepts examined in the different didactic units, and that were related to the professional skills that had to be developed. Each case had a predominant variable and their introduction and resolution had a greater relation with some of the functional areas of media companies examined in the course. The action plan intended to address the following suppositions per semester:

- A case study related to media companies' human resources area.
- A case study related to the production and distribution of content.
- A case study related to marketing and sales.
- A case study related to the financial area.

Therefore, if we take into account the two semesters we worked two case studies for each of the aforementioned functional areas.

During September and October 2011 and February and March 2012 (for the first and second semesters, respectively), teachers contacted people responsible for the aforementioned areas to ask for their collaboration. Through interviews with these media professionals teachers obtained the necessary documentation and information to articulate the cases studies, with a special emphasis in collecting the necessary data

about each variable, the main strategic alternatives managed by the professionals responsible for these decisions, adopted solutions, and results.

The project required the cases to deal with recent yet-closed situations so that companies were not reluctant to share information about them. Based on actual data teachers wrote the case, structured the various teaching materials and proposed a work plan to the students with the corresponding teaching planning of the theoretical sessions and practices needed for their resolution.

Teachers worked in this initial phase of documentation of cases in teams of two, so that each teacher prepared two practical cases per semester.

Second phase: Implementation in the classroom/virtual campus and resolution of cases by students.

Work teams of seven to ten students were formed to solve each of the proposed practical suppositions. These teams remained formed for the resolution of all the case studies during the semester in which the course was taught.

- Teachers devoted a first session to explain the case to resolve, the method, the basic information about the involved variables and the main concepts and information sources needed to solve the case.

- Teachers gave students all materials they considered relevant to illustrate the problem (like documents and links) through the virtual campus. In addition, teachers activated the internal communication channels needed to guarantee the work of all teams, like the forum and chat of the Moodle platform.

- Each work team had one month to document, propose and solve each of the practical suppositions. During this time team members had to perform certain tasks individually, others in micro groups (2-3 members) and others collectively as a team (7-10 members). Some of these tasks –like the drafting of certain documents and reports– had to be delivered to the teacher.

- Teachers scheduled two tutorials per team (one in the classroom and one on-line via the virtual campus) to offer support and clarify doubts that may have arisen throughout the resolution of the case.

Third phase: Exposition in the classroom of the solutions adopted by each of the teams.

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Two practical sessions were devoted to each case. In them, teams exposed and shared the solutions they adopted to solve the proposed business problem. Before these sessions each team had to submit a final written report with the proposed solution to the teacher.

In order to trigger and increase interaction between all the attendees, these classroom-based sessions involved a teaching method that was based on direct participation and was supported by the Educlick technology and its clickers, which were used by students to give immediate responses.

Teachers proposed specific questions about the analysed case variables so that students could decide (through their votes to the different suggested alternatives) and then justify their decision in front of the class.

Each team had 2-3 clickers –one for every 2-3 students– and had to answer the questions made by the teacher during the session to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquired. Some of the questions were related to certain variables and had to be answered by the team members who examined those variables in more depth.

In the final stage of these sessions, the solutions adopted by each group were contrasted with the real solution implemented by the company and the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed alternatives were debated. As a general rule, the teacher provided such information but in some cases the media professionals who worked on the real problem were invited to share their points of view with students.

2.3. Materials and technical support

The development of this project required the resources usually available in the classroom, like Internet access and LCD projector, and the Moodle platform for the development of the Virtual Campus. It is necessary to incorporate specific materials for the sessions of debate and interaction with students in the classroom. To put energy into these sessions we proposed the use of the interactive clickers of the Educlick system because it they are in high demand in the field of university teaching and because other centres that have previously used them have reported optimal results. Moreover, the Educlick platform offers comprehensive technical support for the proper functioning of the equipment.

The resources required are:

1. Educlick software. It allows defining questions through the preparation of slides and audio and video editing, and the immediate tabulation of responses and their transference to Excel.
2. A computer in which the software can be installed.

3. An Educlick sender-receiver base. Communication can be established through the controls via infrared or radio frequency (both systems available).
4. 30 Educlick clickers.

Given the high cost of proving each student with a clicker (which would require having a minimum of 86 devices) we decided to work with 30 clickers so that each team had 2 or 3 clickers and two or three students could share one clicker to respond to the issues raised in the classroom. Similar projects have demonstrated that it is possible to generate the desired group dynamics by giving one clicker to two or maximum three students. This situation forces the planning of timing and procedures, and to include a previous session in which the members of the micro-teams can share their ideas and negotiate the final opinion of the group, which can then be expressed through the clickers.

The timetables of the four cohorts that took this course during the four-month period do not coincide so it was possible to use the material with each cohort without facing problems of availability of equipment.

Initially the use of this technology was intended to enhance the teaching of Media Management Theory course of the journalism programme, but we later decided to use it and optimise it, whenever possible, in the teaching of other undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

3. Evaluation and dissemination of the activities

The teacher evaluated the solutions proposed for each of the practical suppositions by the teams of students. The objectives that must be met with this activity had to be explained in the course guide through an evaluation matrix.

The evaluation took into account the operation of each team and the individual work of each member. Thus, students obtained individual grades for each of the practical exercises and then these grades were averaged out to obtain a final evaluation for these exercises, which accounts for 20% of the final grade for the course.

The objective was to compile all the materials related to each of the practical suppositions to develop an e-book containing all the cases developed as part of this course. These materials will be classified so that they could be consulted by any student –through the university's virtual campus and digital library– and they become a compilation of cases that provides practical knowledge that complements the contents studied as part of the course.

The project involves sharing these experiences, about the development of case studies as support material in the teaching of subjects related to Media Management, with teachers

from foreign universities to undertake collaborative work with them and give the course a more international approach that enriches the education of our students.

4. Conclusions

This article has explained the teaching innovation project developed based on the teaching of the Media Management Theory course. This project was conceived in the context of adaptation to the EHEA and the creation of new journalism degrees. Based on this methodological proposal, this innovation project will allow the analysis of the education system that will prepare the future communication professionals.

The introduction of the new subject, already structured into the ECTS, has been considered as an opportunity to change and renew the contents, methods and teaching activities, as to develop new functions for the teachers giving the course.

The main objective of the project is to encourage a more active learning that allows the development of the specific and transversal skills needed for the students to understand the operation of media companies and generate a critical judgment about the communication markets on their own.

The coordinated work of all the teachers in charge of this subject is essential to achieve significant pedagogical transformations that go beyond the simple renewal of contents and programmes. This profound change requires the joint planning and work of the teaching team. The planning of activities, the use of ICTs, the evaluation and analysis of results are much more productive when carried out in groups and when the different groups have the possibility of comparing results.

The planning and execution phases of the innovation project, as well as the inclusion of the corresponding objectives and activities, are critical to achieve success. The faculty requires time to learn to use the new teaching dynamics and methodologies. The development of the innovation project in several stages (in this case in the academic years 2010-11/2011-12) allows teachers to focus their efforts in a much more manageable way. The design of activities, the introduction of different teaching methods (many of them initially unknown by teachers), the adoption of the roles required in the new educational paradigm, and the inclusion of new technologies should not be expected to be achieved in the short term.

The use of Web 2.0 communication tools and ICTs generate great learning opportunities for teachers and students. We knew that blogs were frequently used in the teaching of journalism and communication and in our case we also wanted to experiment with the possibilities of podcasting and this experience was valued very positively. The team production of podcasts about the course contents allowed a much more autonomous

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learning by students, a different treatment of many of the programme contents, a collective learning and the reproduction of the dynamics typical of the structures and production processes of the media companies.

The production of interviews with media professionals brings students closer to the journalistic tasks and allows them to generate information by themselves and to turn this information into part of the course contents.

In the current stage of the project, the case studies and problem solving are turning out to be ideal methods to generate active learning in the field of Media Management. The design of this type of activity requires a significant workload, especially when trying to present cases extracted directly from the real world. Our project has opted for the extraction of data –which allows rebuilding and narrating the situation for pedagogical purposes– through interviews with media professionals and executives.

The conduction of these interviews adds difficulty to the construction of the cases –due to the reluctance often shown by media companies to share information– but the results compensates for the invested time because they allow developing cases that are much closer to the business reality, which subsequently maximises the chances of students achieving applicable and contextualised learning objectives.

The preparation of cases for first-year students requires teacher to adapt those cases to the students' level of knowledge. In the phase of discussion and presentation of solutions to the problem, the use of technological tools such as Educlick enhances interaction in the classroom which adds motivation to students and gives teachers new opportunities to energise the sessions successfully.

The combination of different methods, like master lectures, practical work, case studies, resolution of problems, use of immediate remote response systems, and tutorials, has been proven to improve students' disposition and attitude towards the subject be very significantly. This teaching model is reinforced with the use of all the available communication channels, including the virtual learning platforms.

We have already highlighted the main positive effects of the innovation process but cannot ignore the difficulties identified in our experience: most active learning methods are based on work with small groups of students so that the teacher can supervise and guide the activities. The first-year cohorts of the journalism programme of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid are composed of 85 to 90 students. This number is not suitable for the teaching model proposed by the Bologna Process and requires an extra effort from teachers. The high number of students requires

the teacher to adapt the activities and to divide the group, which in most cases generates a greater workload and undoubtedly affects the learning outcomes.

The incorporation in the course guide of many practical activities and the implementation of some of the aforementioned methods entails a reduction in the number of programme contents that are taught. Even taking into account the distribution of work proposed by the ECTS for the teaching of Media Management Theory it has been necessary to reduce the amount of material that was taught in similar subjects. We could interpret this as an abandonment of the quantitative aspects of the course to focus on a learning process that is much more fruitful for the student. The knowledge provided by this teaching proposal is perhaps more reduced in quantitative terms but is much more significant in students' development of cognitive, professional and attitudinal competences.

As a final consideration, from this modest perspective that tries to implement a new teaching model based on the Media Management Theory course, we would like to point out that the success or failure of a teaching innovation project depends of several factors, but also that perhaps the most important factor is the degree of self-satisfaction that teachers and students manage to achieve throughout the joint learning process.

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Explanation of the work undertaken by the authors

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The specific distribution of tasks for the preparation of this article was as follows:

Fernando Peinado: Coordination of the production of the article; direction of human resources; development of theoretical framework, justification, hypotheses and objectives; analysis of results (evaluation and dissemination of activities); and development of conclusions.

Manuel Fernández-Sande: Development of theoretical framework, methodology, work plan, hypotheses and objectives; analysis of results (evaluation and dissemination of activities); writing of conclusions; and literary review.

Dolores Rodríguez-Barba: Development of hypotheses and objectives; analysis of results (evaluation and dissemination of activities); literary and documentary review;

production of the article; application of rules for publication; general review of the article.

Miguel Ángel Ortiz-Sobrino: Development of hypotheses and objectives; analysis of results (evaluation and dissemination of activities); literature review; adaptation of the contents to the rules for publication.

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